



## MEMORANDUM

August 4, 2006

**TO:** Deputy Chief Operating Officers  
Department Directors  
Public Information Officers (PIO)

**FROM:** Mayor Jerry Sanders

**SUBJECT:** One City – One Voice: Mayoral Policies for Media Inquiries

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Since taking office, I have been committed to making the decisions of my administration clear and known to all. I have done that, in large part, by hosting almost daily news conferences on the extensive variety of issues that impact our citizens. Daily, I have also made myself available to the diverse media outlets that cover important municipal issues.

Our City's taxpayers rightly expect me to be accountable to them for the decisions of my administration. If it is true that as strong mayor, I am responsible for the operations and policies of City government, then it should follow that employees in mayoral departments should reflect the opinions of my administration when speaking with the news media. It is my strongly held belief that our City must speak with one voice at least with respect to the departments under my command. The consistency and reliability of the information we provide is of critical importance to me and our citizens.

As part of the policy planning process, I welcome a hearty and robust debate among staff. I tell staff members every day that they should tell me what I need to hear not what I want to hear. But when those private conversations end and I have made my judgment, I expect that all mayoral department employees will unify behind my decision and carry out the policies of my administration. This is the hallmark of any successful organization and the taxpayers should expect nothing less.

I realize that the transition to the strong mayor form of government has been confusing for some. By and large, our dedicated employees have been exceptionally enthusiastic, understanding and cooperative. As many of you have told me, we have created order out of chaos. Today, we continue this process by codifying our processes for media inquiries.

**Media Inquiries:**

Members of the news media should be provided with accurate and timely information. PIO's are authorized to provide factual information to the news media, as they do ably and efficiently every day. Statements regarding my administration's policies should only be provided by Deputy Chiefs, department directors and members of my press office.

If you are unsure of my position on the issue that is the subject of the inquiry, I would ask that you discuss it with me before speaking with the media so that we can come to an agreement. I would also ask that you coordinate your contact with my press office because invariably what happens is that the news media calls them following your conversation. It's important that I know and understand the information you provided. There may be occasions during which I will want members of my press office staff to be part of interviews.

PIO's should continue to assist senior staff members with responses to media inquiries. It is entirely appropriate for subject matter experts throughout the organization to speak with the news media and provide factual information. Employees are bound by the same guidelines and should not address policy issues unless approved to do so by a Deputy Chief, department director or member of my press office.

**Public Records Act Requests:**

Public records requests should be responded to in the manner proscribed by law and in consultation with your department advisor in the City Attorney's office.

So that I can be knowledgeable of the requests being made, I ask that you forward to my press office copies of those requests. If the request is being made by a member of the news media, I would also ask that you provide the press office with the copies of the documents produced. Our experience has been that news media will call my press office regarding some of those documents.

Thank you.